

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 05417

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: OVIP (FUKUDA, TAKEO)  
SUBJECT: FUKUDA VISIT PAPER: JAPAN AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

REF: TOKYO 4578

1. JAPAN AND ASEAN: PM FUKUDA'S MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY INITIATIVE DURING 1977 WAS AN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE JAPANESE RELATIONS WITH SOUTHEAST ASIA THROUGH ATTENDANCE AT THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN KUALA LUMPUR IN AUGUST FOLLOWED BY VISITS TO THE OTHER ASEAN CAPITALS AND RANGOON. IN SETTING FORTH HIS "FUKUDA DOCTRINE", THE PM SOUGHT TO ASSUAGE SOUTHEAST ASIAN SUSPICIONS OF JAPANESE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MOTIVES IN THE REGION; PROMISED INCREASED JAPANESE ASSISTANCE TO ASEAN'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AND ATTEMPTED TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONS THROUGH INCREASED CULTURAL EXCHANGE.

2. FUKUDA'S INITIATIVE WAS MOTIVATED NOT ONLY BY IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM SELF-INTEREST IN PRESERVING JAPANESE ECONOMIC ACCESS TO THE REGION BY ENCOURAGING ITS STABILITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, BUT ALSO BY THE PERCEIVED NEED OF THE JAPANESE TO PLAY A MORE ACTIVE AND BENEFICIAL POLITICAL ROLE IN ASIA -- A ROLE WHICH THE  
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U.S. ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS, INCLUDING PM FUKUDA'S MARCH 1977 VISIT TO WASHINGTON, HAD URGED THEM TO TAKE.

3. BUT DESPITE A HIGHLY-PUBLICIZED AND SUCCESSFUL START, THE JAPANESE FOLLOW-THROUGH APPEARS TO HAVE LOST MUCH OF ITS ENERGY. PM FUKUDA WAS CAREFUL TO QUALIFY HIS COMMITMENTS TO ASEAN WITH APPROPRIATE CAVEATS; NOTABLY THAT

JAPANESE ASSISTANCE TO THE FIVE ASEAN NATIONAL PROJECTS WOULD BE DEPENDENT ON THEIR PROVEN ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY. THE ASEAN COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN SLOW TO MEET THIS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS. SIMILARLY, IT IS NOT YET CLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT THE JAPANESE WILL BE ABLE TO SATISFY ASEAN DESIRES FOR "A SPECIAL TRADE RELATIONSHIP" WITHOUT SACRIFICING LARGER, MULTILATERAL TRADE OBJECTIVES. JAPANESE DOMESTIC AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS ARE OPPOSED TO ANY REDUCTION OF TARIFF BARRIERS WHICH MIGHT BENEFIT THEIR ASEAN COMPETITORS. FURTHERMORE, THE GOJ HAS BEEN RESTRAINED FROM IMPLEMENTING OTHER TRADE SCHEMES, NOTABLY A FORM OF STABILIZATION OF EXPORT INCOMES (STABEX) FOR ASEAN, IN PART BECAUSE OF U.S. DISAPPROVAL.

4. JAPAN AND INDOCHINA: AN IMPORTANT COROLLARY TO INCREASED SUPPORT FOR THE ASEAN STATES HAS BEEN AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE INDOCHINA COMMUNIST NATIONS, PARTICULARLY VIETNAM. ALTHOUGH THE GOJ RECOGNIZES THAT ITS PRIMARY INTERESTS LIE WITH ASEAN, IT ARGUES THAT IN THE LONG RUN JAPAN AND OTHER WESTERN NATIONS SHOULD PROVIDE MEASURED ASSISTANCE TO VIETNAM, WHICH WOULD HELP WEAN THE VIETNAMESE AWAY FROM AN EXCESSIVE RELIANCE ON THE SOVIET UNION.

5. THUS FAR, JAPANESE EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH VIETNAM HAVE BEEN HINDERED BY DRAWN-OUT NEGOTIATIONS  
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OVER HANOI'S ASSUMPTION OF PAST JAPANESE LOANS TO THE FORMER SAIGON REGIME. MOREOVER, THE OUTBREAK OF MAJOR FIGHTING BETWEEN VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA, WITH ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR BOTH SOVIET AND CHINESE POLICY IN THE REGION, HAS GIVEN THE JAPANESE SOME PAUSE AS TO THE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY IN INDOCHINA.

6. JAPAN AND THE U.S. IN SOUTHEAST ASIA: JAPAN'S SOUTH-EAST ASIAN POLICIES HAVE BEEN PREDICATED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE U.S. WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY A MAJOR POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ROLE IN THE REGION. JAPAN DOES NOT SEEK TO ACT AS A SURROGATE FOR THE U.S. WHILE THE GOJ DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. IS NOW PULLING OUT OF SOUTHEAST ASIA, THERE HAVE BEEN SOME EXPRESSIONS OF JAPANESE DISAPPOINTMENT AT WHAT THEY SEE AS A LOW LEVEL OF U.S. INTEREST IN THAT REGION OVER THE PAST YEAR.

7. ALTHOUGH VARIOUS RECENT DEVELOPMENTS -- THE SLOWNESS OF THE ASEAN MACHINERY, SIGNS OF DOMESTIC INSTABILITY IN INDONESIA, THE PROSPECT OF SUSTAINED CONFLICT IN INDOCHINA, AND THE GOJ'S PRE-OCCUPATION WITH OTHER POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ISSUES -- HAVE ALL ACTED AS

INHIBITING FACTORS, PM FUKUDA REMAINS PERSONALLY COMMITTED  
TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF JAPAN-SOUTHEAST ASIAN RELATIONS.  
DURING HIS CONVERSATIONS IN WASHINGTON, HE IS LIKELY TO  
EMPHASIZE THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF U.S. AND JAPANESE  
INTERESTS IN THE AREA, SEEK AUTHORITATIVE RECONFIRMATION  
OF THE U.S. INTENTION TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE THERE, AND  
SUGGEST THE DESIRABILITY OF A FORTHCOMING U.S. POLICY  
TOWARD ASEAN.  
MANSFIELD

DISSIMINATION COORDINATED WITH SS/O PER MS. KENNEDY.

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